

THE URBAN SANITARY DISTRICT OF SANDWICH.

ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDING
31ST DECEMBER, 1924.

TO THE PORT SANITARY AUTHORITY, SANDWICH.

MR. MAYOR AND GENTLEMEN,—

In accordance with instructions from the Ministry of Health, I beg to hand you this Report for year 1924. During the twelve months 312 vessels arrived with cargoes. 265 of these were coastwise and 47 foreign. Of the coastwise 110 arrived "light," the remainder with cargoes, consisting of Coal, Ballast, Corn or Timber. These vessels are continually passing in or out of this Port to London. The traffic also of the "Foreign" is made by a few regular traders passing to and fro from this Port (with cargoes principally of Stone and Timber) to Ostend, Ghent, Nieuport, Calais and Guernsey.

The required Inspections have been made by the Port Sanitary Inspector, and conditions were found satisfactory. No case of Infectious Disease was present, or has been reported, and no rats reported or complained of.

Dr. Yeates (from the Ministry of Health) visited the Port and held an enquiry last September (after his inspection) at the Town Hall. His advice and recommendations were much appreciated, for which he received the thanks of the Mayor at the close of the proceedings. At the present time the Government is promoting a Bill to constitute a Harbour Board, which will take over the rights and duties of the Port from the Corporation, they having representation.

I remain, Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

J. W. HARRISSON,

Port Medical Officer.

16th Feb., 1925.

ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDING
31ST DECEMBER, 1924.

SANDWICH URBAN DISTRICT.

MR. MAYOR AND GENTLEMEN,—

I beg to submit herewith the Annual Report of the Public Health and Sanitary Condition of the Borough of Sandwich for the year ended 31st December, 1924, giving also the vital statistics and comments in matters relating to Sanitary administration.

The population of the Borough in the census of 1921 was 3,161. The Registrar-General last year estimated the number 3,122. For the statistical purposes of this Report I take the number 3,150 as representing a fair average basis, as was done last year.

No injurious trades are carried on, the chief occupations being those of an ordinary agricultural town.

The number of inhabited houses at the end of the year was about 780, with very few exceptions, occupied by one family only. The rateable value under the new assessment is £17,700, one penny rate producing £67.

The total number of deaths registered within the Borough during the year was 36. Two of these (after inquest or enquiry) were classified as Accidental, leaving 34 due to age or disease within the town. The number of deaths allocated to us from outside public institutions, viz., Infirmary, Asylums, Hospitals, was 7.

The death-rate per thousand dying within the District is 10.8. The death-rate of persons (reckoned as Residents) dying *outside* the Borough is 2.2. The combined death-rate, therefore, is 13. per thousand, as against the exceptional death-rate last year of 11.9.

Of the 36 deaths within the town 14 were aged 70 or over, the oldest (a woman) being 95.

The number of deaths in infants under 12 months of age was somewhat high in the year, reaching a total of 7; 1 of these was certified as accidental (suffocated in bed), 1 a premature twin, 1 whooping cough, 1 measles, 2 broncho pneumonia, 1 congenital heart disease.

The number of births in year 1924 was 53 (including 2 illegitimate). This number yields a birth-rate per thousand of 16.8, as compared with a higher birth-rate of 20.3 in 1923.

During the twelve months the following notifiable diseases were reported: 5 Scarlet Fever, 3 Erysipelas, 5 Tuberculosis, 5 Pneumonia—two of these complications of Influenza. There were no cases of Ophthalmia Neonatorum in this District.

The proposed new Drainage system is under the consideration of the Council. The old system has worked fairly well; the tidal River Stour eventually receiving most of the sewage.

A constant supply of water has been maintained from the Corporation Waterworks during the year, and the reservoirs have been kept filled. A few complaints were received of lack of pressure. The question of improved distribution is receiving the serious consideration of the Water Supply Committee. A sample of water taken from a house supply was submitted to the County Analyst for bacteriological examination, and the report states it to be quite satisfactory for drinking purposes. There is now a copious supply of water to the wells at the pumping station.

Between three and four fifths of the houses in the town are provided with water closet system, the remainder almost entirely privy pail. No complaints have been made. The removal from earth closets and house refuse is carried out by Corporation employees, and taken in covered carts to a dump one mile from the town, where it is deodorised. It is now surrounded by a wall, which prevents it from being an obvious nuisance from frequenters of the adjacent public road. Efforts have been made to exterminate any rats found there.

The Sanitary Inspector's Report shows the number of inspections and re-inspections made to be 337; 25 nuisances were dealt with under the Public Health Act, these being chiefly from defective drains, pails or privies, and three cases of overcrowding. All these were abated upon service of an informal notice, or in some cases verbal. These figures do not include a number of simple stopped drains, which were immediately attended to by the Inspector's staff without service of notice. As in the previous year, much improvement has been made in minor repairs in old property, which has made it quite habitable, though not of first class standard, which I consider under the present day labour and economic conditions is as much as should reasonably be expected.

No offensive trades are carried on in the town, and there is but one lodging-house, which has recently been rebuilt.

Under the Housing Act 61 inspections and re-inspections were made, and 13 informal notices were served, after which the necessary work was executed. Two closing orders have recently been made. In common with other old towns, the poorer class of old property is a problem difficult of solution, but the Town Council are fully alive to the need of better housing. Taking advantage of the Housing Act of 1923, they immediately evolved a housing scheme, which is an admirable and a most business-like one, and I understand for its all round merit is considered one of the soundest in this part of Kent. During the year the scheme was extended to 44 houses (Parlour and non-Parlour types), which means the housing under first class conditions of about 220 persons, and this is capable of considerable further extension, which assuredly will soon be taken advantage of.

The Sanitary condition and Water Supply of the Schools appear to be satisfactory. The Milk Supply from Dairy Farms in Rural District is adequate and good. The Milkshops have been periodically inspected, and found to be kept in good condition.

There are two Cowsheds within the Borough. Both were inspected from time to time, and the Inspector found no cause for complaint in either of them.

The Police Authority took 14 samples of various forms of Food during the year, viz., Milk, Butter, Coffee, Cocoa, Lard, Tapioca, Jam, Gin, Whiskey and Brandy. With the exception of one sample of Milk, which was reported "of inferior quality but genuine," the Analyst's Report was satisfactory.

The number of Bakehouses in the town is six. They have been regularly inspected, and the condition always found to be good and clean.

There are two Slaughterhouses within the Borough. One of these has been considerably improved during the year. The other is in a fairly satisfactory condition. No complaint has been received concerning either of them. No primary or re-vaccinations were found to be necessary by the Medical Officer during the year. No Anthrax or Rabies have been present. The notification of Tuberculosis is adopted by the local doctors and the County Tuberculosis Officer, whose centre is at Deal, and is much appreciated by the unfortunate sufferers. There is little Venereal Disease in the town. Notices of advice, time and place of treatment are posted in the usual public places.

The Midwife is inspected by the Supervising Authority of the County Council, and her work has been reported as excellent during the year. For family reasons the Midwife sent in her resignation, and the second Nurse (who has always worked well with her) also resigned. Two fresh nurses have since been appointed of similar status and equal efficiency. The Midwife will keep the expectant mother under observation (after engagement) by visiting her after child-birth, and when her period of attendance ceases the child is passed to the care of the Health Visitor, and continues under her charge until school age is reached, and the School Nurse takes the case on.

The Health Visitor (who is also the Midwife) attends weekly at the Child Welfare Centre, which is organised and managed voluntarily by ladies in Sandwich. It is most carefully, efficiently and economically conducted. Its influence has extended rapidly, and the benefit is becoming more and more apparent; as the poorer class are gradually drawn under its beneficial action by having a visible example set them by the more intelligent and prosperous mothers, with whom they are necessarily brought into contact, and also by witnessing their appreciation.

There has been a great increase of work in connection with the Maternity and Child Welfare movement. 1,031 visits were made during the twelve months, not including 45 visits to the Child Welfare Centre. In the previous year 799 visits were made, which also was an increase on the previous year. The immense benefit received from the advice, time and attention given by the Health Visitor is scarcely realised, but its good influence is slowly manifesting itself, and will assuredly mean an improved standard of health in the next generation.

The average weekly attendance at the Centre for various purposes by mothers is 30, and rather less for infants.

Monthly consultations are held by the Medical Officer at the Centre.

The Hospital accommodation for Infectious Diseases (including Small Pox) is by arrangement with the Rural Authority, and is two miles distant. No extension or change has been made during the year in these buildings.

The Public Health Act, 1890 (Parts 2, 3, 4) are adopted, and local Act 27, George III. (67) is in force.

The Motor Ambulance procured for the town and district in 1922 has this year been the means of conveying in comparative comfort (and speedily) 48 patients, and the mileage has been 762. It is kept in excellent working order.

The Municipal Council are fully alive to the probable future development of the town, and I sincerely believe and trust continue to recognise the unique character of its past historical and archæological history, records of which are carefully preserved in the Town Hall and also in many ancient buildings. To attempt to adapt its narrow streets to future or even present industrial requirements is scarcely possible—even if the main street roads could *always* be kept in *perfect* order—which is not the case, and unless this main road heavy traffic is diverted by connecting roads outside the Borough, I fear serious damage, if not actual downfall of adjacent houses, may occur, perhaps involving life. In any case the noise and vibration are by no means helpful to the sick, and in the streets are a constant menace to both old and young, which the Council as custodians of the lives and property of the citizens will no doubt strongly represent to the Road and Transport Authority.

I remain, Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

J. W. HARRISSON,

M.O.H.

17th Feb., 1925.

